

The English Leaflet

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AN ILLUSTRATED ENGLISH NOTE-BOOK

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Sewickley Academy

I remember, as a child, my eagerness to use my own mind, to attack a problem in my own way, to extract delight from a matter in my own fashion, and my impatience with superimposed authority that insisted upon telling me *how* and *where* and *what* to do. School was so frightfully dull, I thought, with everyone working along in exactly the same way; it was so joyless to have work blocked out for days, weeks, and even months ahead. College was better, but even there one was a receptive being, not creative. The class was an exception, certainly, where one was encouraged to adopt a questioning rather than a docile attitude and where one was allowed to discover for herself. That exceptional classroom, however, remains for me a place of beauty. I remember only vaguely what we did there, but remember vividly that we did it with delight.

It is scarcely strange, then, that when my own teaching days were upon me, I should pity the children who were to endure the stupefying processes of education, and should determine to bring them some of the joy found in the unique (to me) classroom before-mentioned. But how to do it was the question. What was the matter with the children that they were dull and joyless over school tasks? Why were they so lacking in initiative and resourcefulness, so dependent upon the teacher? Why did they see so little beauty in the world about them and find the world of books devoid of all life? Why did some of the children possess originality? Why were those who had had far wider opportunities often so mediocre and lethargic? Was it the fault

of overworked teachers, uninterested in their work, or the fault of over-indulgent parents? Above all, was it possible to help develop in each of the children a healthy individuality, a high degree of intellectual independence, and a certain joyousness derived from these? Could they be taught to know for the sake of living?

These were a few of the many questions in my mind, but this much seemed clear. Many children were being cramped and devitalized by standardized teaching methods. Surely teaching was a matter of artistry, not of machinery. Surely an aim of education was not the production of children unvarying in type like so many sticks of candy, but the gradual development in each child of a strong personality. If this were true, each child most needed freedom to grow, not a freedom of rank or offensive growth, but a freedom so lightly yet firmly guided that an individual beauty of character would result. Not only this, but the growth should be a natural, joyous partaking of the world in which the child lived. With such an end in view, what did these children most need?

At the time, I answered swiftly, without the comforting knowledge that the Headmaster at Rugby¹ agreed with me, that they lacked imagination, and that if I had the power I should give each child a goodly dose. More than ten years of teaching experience in various private schools have caused me to believe my first judgment was more basic than I knew, for I have learned what a vitalizing effect the stimulation of the imagination may have.

At the same time, I have had to learn what this term "imagination" means and what it implies. "Imagination is the image-making process," I am told; "its function is to reconstruct and combine in thought, it looks ahead, helps to fill in gaps of our sense experience and gives us a truer picture of reality." Or again, "Cultivation of the imagination requires rich and varied experience of the world of *external*

(1). "To be bad at English," the Headmaster at Rugby told us, "seems to be regarded by both masters and boys as a natural defect." But he himself believes that this failure in English and the lack of imagination which is mainly responsible for it, are curable by better methods, especially by training boys to observe the connection of ideas in what they read, instead of trying to remember disconnected facts.

—Departmental Report on the Teaching of English in England. (p. 105.)

acts and events, since it is dependent for its content on sensory experience." And also, "Imagination implies ideas controlled by facts. Abundance of sensory experience of the right sort and *continued application* of such experience is necessary." Another authority writes, "The child needs first-hand knowledge of concrete objects and situations Intellectual development begins with and is based on *perception*. Higher intellectual processes—memory, imagination—are dependent on data given by the outside world."

These principles have been tried out in my teaching, based on the belief that imagination was not so much a matter of inheritance as of training, that young children normally had such a power, dulled by the school routine before they reached the upper grades, and that it could be there at least partially revived.

When I realized, then, that the majority of the children who came to me observed the external world at best most cursorily, we spent much time out-of-doors observing, listening, touching. Inside, too, time was spent in the same way. Later, symbols in the form of pictures, maps, and models were brought to class (sometimes by me, more often by them), and association made with the objects actually seen or heard. The use of these was of course encouraged in order that the printed page later on might seem to spring to life, and words no longer remain empty symbols. Not only was visualization encouraged, but we did much reading aloud, particularly of poetry, that the sound of the word might not be isolated from appearance; i. e. that "brook" written on the page or heard might evoke the image of the actual "brook" heard and seen and touched in the woods nearby.

From such simple beginnings that would seem almost a review of childish experiences, it was easy to pass gradually to the interpretation of poetry and prose and to creative writing. In every kind of work, association with first-hand sensory experience was emphasized wherever possible. Often it was necessary to reconstruct and combine such experience into something new, when it became natural to express in drawing or words what this new conception or group of

ideas was and discover whether it was based on facts. It was equally natural, too, that illustrated talks should take the place of those that had been unillustrated, and that illustrated English note-books should follow as a matter of course. These note-books have proved to be such a successful device in vitalizing English work that a description of their use may be here interesting and helpful.

II

The idea as originally conceived is not mine—I believe a California teacher is responsible for that—so I can only claim it through adoption and successful use in private schools East and West.

The aim of such a book, as has been of course suggested, is not primarily the keeping of an accurate record of the student's daily work, although it does accomplish this also. Rather the emphasis is placed upon its use as a stimulating force in developing the individual's interest in English. forming a closer association between the study of English and daily living and firing the student with an enthusiasm for wider reading and even creative writing.

Of this design the student is told nothing, lest the aims be thwarted at the outset. The process is naturally a slow one, but even a year's work shows an interesting change from a pupil's former attitude of indifference to one of delight in his work. The teacher meanwhile has apparently but one idea—to impress the pupil with the joy of studying English for the sake of living and to find through that study that living may be even more delightful.

At the beginning of the school year each pupil is given a lined and margined note-book, approximately ten by eight inches in size. This note-book may be loose-leaf or bound. The loose-leaf is better for younger pupils, as errors may be more easily corrected by page substitution; the bound book is better for the older pupils as its form militates against carelessness, and the work of older pupils is presumably free from the type of error that demands complete recasting.

For the first assignment each pupil is asked to decide whether he wishes to leave his note-book as it is, or make it

more attractive in appearance. If he wishes to do the latter, it is suggested that he look at books and gain ideas from their colors and bindings, noting that the simplest plan is often the most beautiful in effect. Various schemes are usually followed. Perhaps one girl will cover hers in cretonne; a boy will leave his as it is, sternly masculine in appearance, or cover it in sturdy black oil-cloth; a girl will do the same, but add a gaily colored picture for contrast. Another girl, more ingenious, will cross-stitch the black oil-cloth in a conventional pattern of bright colors. When completed, these books are brought to class, exhibited, and class discussion encouraged as to which is most satisfactory and effective.

The next assignment is a purely mechanical one. All pages throughout the book must be numbered carefully, and on each page, except the first, a line must be drawn in pencil, one inch to the right of the margin line and parallel with it. The use of this line is explained to the pupils later. They are also asked to take care not to draw or write on the first page as it is to act as a fly-leaf. They are told, too, that page three is to be arranged a little differently from the others and is to be used by the teacher for recording grades. Not only is it to have a line drawn one inch from the red margin line, but a second line is to be drawn one inch to the left of the outer edge. These three divisions are then to be headed, *Date*, *Remarks*, *Grade*.

After this, the pupil is ready to use the note-book. He is told that the space to the *left* of the margin-line is to be used for the *date* of an assignment and for that alone; the space to the right of the margin-line (which he has pencilled off) is to be used for the headings, *Assignment*, *Preparation*, *Class Notes*. The assignment proper is to be written in the wide space beyond the pencilled line, the preparation done, i. e. answers to questions, book-lists, or whatever the preparation may involve (except a long composition which is placed in a separate theme-book) is to be placed opposite the heading, *Preparation*. Any notes he may later take in class, and thinks worth keeping, should be placed opposite the heading, *Class Notes*. For greater clearness a diagram of a page is usually placed on the board. For example,

Sept. 10	Assign.	-----

	Prep.	-----

	Class	-----
	Notes	-----

In addition to the mechanics of arrangement, i. e. neatness, accuracy, and faithfulness in keeping the note-book up-to-date, it is impressed upon the student that his note-book will increase in value and delight in proportion as he is able to illustrate his work. This may be done (but is not often, except by students of unusual ability) by original drawings, or by clippings, illustrations, sketches, cartoons, bits of verse, or other material illustrating the subject in hand. A surprising amount of such material may be found in current magazines, such as *The Bookman*, *Vogue*, *Scribner's*, *Century*, *Mentor*, or in current newspapers, particularly in the *New York Times Book Review and Magazine Section*, and often in the *Saturday Book Review* or even in the *Christian Science Monitor*.

At first the student may find it difficult to secure this material, but once started on his pilgrimage, he has soon such a large collection of clippings that the next problem is to teach him discrimination.

He needs to learn that a few carefully chosen illustrations are more worth while than a dozen of no importance, and that as the illustration has vividness and beauty as well as appropriateness its value is enhanced. Often a reproduction of a delicately fine drawing is more to be desired than a gaudy picture; again, the color combination in a picture may suggest more nearly the passage to be illustrated.

The main points to be stressed are (1) the illustrating of the note-book as an aid in making verbal impressions more vivid, (2) the cultivation of an alertness in a pupil so that he readily makes a connection between his work at school and what he does and sees elsewhere, (3) the development of the power of resourcefulness in meeting an unexpected situation, and (4) the freer expression of the pupil's individuality.

All these points have been touched upon. Under the last-mentioned, however, it remains to be said that not only is opportunity given to the pupil to illustrate the daily assignment, but also to present in his note-book illustrated reports on a matter that particularly interests him, whether it be contemporary poetry, radio, or the work of a favorite author, such as Robert Frost. Or, a pupil who has seen John Barrymore in *Hamlet* may present in his note-book pictures of John Barrymore in that role, a clipping also from the *New York Times* reviewing the performance, and perhaps add a few lines, giving his own impression of the play. Another pupil may, as one did, carefully search for and find pictures to illustrate *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, copying carefully the appropriate lines below each picture. Still another will find illustrations for *The Ancient Mariner* or *John Gilpin's Ride*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, Irving's *Sketch Book* or whatever the matter under discussion happens to be. As time goes on, the teacher becomes amused, interested, and finally amazed at the ingenuity and interest shown by the pupils in acquiring such material. *Good Housekeeping* contributes pictures of Sleepy Hollow, while *Life* gives a picture of King Arthur's court, a cartoon and an advertisement furnishes a picture of Poe in his study, writing *The Raven*. The list is inexhaustible, but a note-book of this kind needs to be seen in order to be appreciated.

III

At this point, I must return to discuss the page reserved for the teacher's use. This page has already been arranged with the three divisions — *Date, Remarks, Grade*. Yes, these note-books are to be graded, *monthly* at the longest interval, and, in the beginning, until the pupil grows accustomed to the method — *weekly*. And — yes — it does take an enormous amount of time, particularly at first. But gradually, though sometimes oh, so slowly! the pupil learns that attention must be paid to spelling, to punctuation, to sentence form, since an error must always be corrected; gradually he learns what a help and delight that note-book can be, though the teacher must be on her guard to see that correction is always "tempered by

methods that foster the creative impulse." Finally the teacher can say with a sigh of relief, "At last that pupil is learning how the study of English can make living more delightful! At last he (or she) is awake, learning to use what knowledge he possesses and to adapt it to different situations as it is needed!" The pupil will say, unknowing what has been happening, and caring little about your aims, that he has learned to enjoy English; the fond parent may say that you are an inspiring teacher, and you—you will know that you have only used an English note-book as a means to carry across to growing children a hint of the beauty that is English!

Perhaps it is not a method for all schools and for all teachers. But it is a method, which if wisely used, undoubtedly does stimulate the imagination and lead to truer interpretation and increasing appreciation of literature. Furthermore, as this appreciation increases, the child will no longer see in literature merely "*le jeu frivole des fantasies et des formes*," but "*le conflit eternal de l'homme et de la nature*" "*un aspect de l'humanite*" "*la vie qui s'y reflète*" and will realize that therein is found "*les moyens de préparer des hommes a la vie*." Is not this an end toward which English teaching tries to move?

It would therefore seem that a keener realization of the need for imagination stimulation in the upper grades, and definite work with that idea in mind, might do much toward giving the child a higher degree of intellectual independence, a certain joyousness in his work that he now lacks, a more spontaneous expression of himself in his work, and a clearer understanding of the relation his school work bears to life itself. Could we not, then, as teachers hope to be "a more markedly happy lot" (which we are told we are not) and to have a more joyous following approaching in spirit the eagerness of the little followers of the Piper of Hamelin? And if an illustrated English note-book, or any other device, seems to promise them a journey into a fairer country than they have known, who can blame the children for listening, or the piper for continuing his play?

STANDARDIZED JOURNALISM

GISELA BIRKNER

East High School, Cleveland

The value of high school publications is becoming more evident each year. Universities are establishing colleges of journalism, high schools are offering courses in journalism, and the newspapers are offering awards to the best high school publications in nearly all the big cities of the country.

There is, because of this awakening, a great need for standardizing the work in journalism in the high schools. The pupils who go into this field should not be handicapped in any way. If they are to enter college, this work should be recognized. If it is to be recognized, certain uniform standards must be adopted.

At Cleveland, Ohio, the teachers of journalism realized this need and formed the Cleveland Association of Teachers of Journalism. Certain schools in the city were continually carrying off the honors in the national and city contests for school papers. After careful investigation by the Association, it was found that these awards were won because teaching conditions in these schools were conducive to excellent work. Therefore, certain conclusions were drawn and presented to the principals of schools which have student publications, and to the superintendent and his assistants.

Because of this report and because those in supervisory positions are aware of the value of publicity for schools, many improvements toward standardization have been brought about in Cleveland.

The first requisite in the teaching of journalism is to have an adequate text book for the course. At Cleveland Hyde's *Course in Journalistic Writing* has been adopted. Other texts which are approved by most teachers in this field are Harrington's *Writing for Print* and Spencer's *Newswriting*.

If the subject of journalism is to be well taught, the teachers assigned this subject should have a knowledge of the technique and the scope of newspaper work. In order to have colleges accept this course toward entrance, this fact should not be lost sight of.

The following suggestions for a course in journalism were suggested by the Association at Cleveland:

(1) That the course of journalism be divided into two semesters and be listed in the prescribed English course as English Composition—Journalistic Writing. This will eliminate the difficulties often found when the students apply for college entrance and entrance boards question them about credit for journalism.

(2) That one-half unit for each semester's work be given for the course; but that the first semester's credit be withheld until the student has completed the the second semester's work unless in the opinion of the teacher and the principal there is some special reason for crediting one semester's work.

(3) That the course be called English Composition—Journalistic Writing I, for the first semester's work and Journalistic Writing II for the second semester.

(4) That the first semester's work include a review of the principles of composition and punctuation; and the study of the theory and practice of newswriting.

(5) That the second semester's work be the publication of the high-school newspaper, and only students who have completed Course I be permitted to enter Course II; that these students, supervised by faculty advisers, carry on all the work connected with the editorial and business side of the publication.

It was also suggested that the beginning class in Journalistic Writing be one period in length and that the members on the staff be allowed two or more consecutive periods on their daily programs to work on the production of the paper.

The Cleveland Association of Teachers of Journalism, through its committee on standardization, investigated the matter of proper content for the course in English Composition—Journalistic Writing. This committee sent questionnaires to teachers of journalism, to assistant superintendents of this city, and to professors in various universities. From a study of the answers to these questionnaires, the committee arranged the following course of study.

The English Composition—Journalistic Writing should not be offered as a vocational course but primarily as a cultural one, where it can be used as a motivated advanced English course. The purpose of the course is not to turn out experienced newswriters but to give students a greater appreciation of writing and the work of publication.

English Composition—Journalistic Writing should contain one semester's work in theory and practice of newswriting. It should be offered with Course II as an elective senior English

Course. Only students who have successfully completed three years of English should be admitted to the course and they should offer recommendations from regular English teachers. Where exceptional 11A students show aptitude for journalistic writing and have completed the academic requirements for junior work, they should be permitted to enter the course.

The first semester should contain the following minimum essentials:

Ten lessons or two weeks on a review of the principles of English composition illustrated by use of newspaper stories, clearness, emphasis, coherence, unity, drills in capitalization, spelling and punctuation with special emphasis on the study of the style sheet of the school publication.

Ten lessons on the structure of a news story; drills on all kinds of leads; analysis of stories from newspapers for structure; arrangement of paragraphs; length of stories; diction, viewpoint; etc. Assignments to individuals to develop these qualities in students' written work.

Ten lessons on news and news sources—illustrations from papers, practice through school paper.

Five lessons on feature writing—study of best features from newspapers and periodicals, analysis of human interest; informational, humorous, and pathetic types of feature stories; study of references in books in school and public libraries; trial stories by students; criticism of stories by class and instructor.

Ten lessons on the editorial; study of best editorials from reliable newspapers and periodicals; preparation necessary for editorial writer; subjects for interesting editorials, especially developing ideas for editorials in school publication; structure of editorials; kind of editorials; qualities necessary to get editorials read; writing of editorials as assignments.

Five lessons on writing of heads; preparation of head sheet; necessity of conforming to models; characteristics of good heads; criticism of heads in newspapers and school publications, special preparation necessary for head writers; use of words; things to avoid in headlines; study of type used for display heads.

Two lessons on preparation of copy; instructor should insist on strict adherence to rules that make the handling of manuscripts easiest; reason for rules on preparation of copy should conform to rules, once they are taught.

Two lessons on explanation of type used generally in newspapers and school publications.

Two lessons on chief mechanical processes used in publishing a paper; a visit to some newspaper plant will aid in comprehension of this work.

Five lessons on make-up; study of standard make-up as used in best newspapers; principles used in make-up; study of display type; criticism of make-up in school publication; explanation of technical terms.

Four lessons on management of publication; explanation of various officials; students should be given trials through class work in various positions on the staff.

Ten lessons on study of advertising; its relation to English composition; oral and written work can be developed; sales talks can be used, objections to advertising can be brought out and eliminated, giving students training in quick thinking; a study of what kind of advertising could pay in the school publication could be made through questionnaires issued to the students, determining in this way what students buy and what merchants they patronize; students should be urged to write attractive ads and to study how to make them up in an attractive manner; principles in ethics can be brought out in study of advertising; an investigation of how advertising rates are determined; talks by men and women in advertising will stimulate interest.

Five lessons of copy and proof reading; students should be given copy to proof; galley proofs to read.

Two lessons of special reporting dramatics, speeches, art criticism, social function, etc.

English Composition—Journalistic Writing II should be offered only to those students who have completed Course I.

This second semester's work should be the actual writing and publication of the school newspaper. Advisers will have to work out their schedules for writing and publication according to school's requirements. Every student who makes the staff must continue his work throughout the semester and must meet the minimum essentials as laid down by the instructor.

In order to have good student publications not only must the course in journalism be standardized but standard teaching conditions must exist. The teacher who is to act as adviser for the student publication can not do her work well if loaded down with other extra-curricular duties. In Cleveland, most teachers in high schools have five classes, a study hall period, and a homeroom. The Association recommended that "the teacher of journalism have only two classes in addition to his journalism classes; that he be given no homeroom; that study hall work, if assigned him, take the place of a class.

These suggestions for standardization have all been on the assumption that the high school was issuing a weekly publication. Other similar standards would have to be arranged in schools where a biweekly or monthly publication is issued.

EDITORIAL ITEMS

Upon what phase of our English work are we placing our autumn emphasis?

1. Are we testing the efficiency of précis writing?
2. Are we providing exercises that will make our students think more clearly?

3. Are we placing more responsibility upon the pupils?
 4. Are we realizing that more skill in the interpretation of the printed page will aid the student in other studies as much as it does in English?
 5. Are we beginning to make each student realize that he cannot develop good language habits by practice in the English classroom only? He must—to secure the highest efficiency in English—practice the art of high attainment in other classes and in his extra-moral life, in all oral and written utterance. There is no other way to form the unescapable virtue of the habit of good English.
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MAKING GOOD ENGLISH POPULAR

The most vital element in any school is student opinion. To emphasize the radicalism of youth is a common error. The normal individual boy and the normal individual girl seek to conform to custom. If other freshmen boys wear green caps, the new comer to the school immediately yearns to don a green cap. If the spirit of the college extols slang and mediocrity, the entering youth finds it next to impossible to resist the influence of this miasma.

He is the greatest English teacher within such a school who is able to rid the student body of such a sentiment and to establish in its stead a spirit of wholesome admiration for speech and writing that immediately reflects cultural attainment of a high order. Such a teacher will convince his students that the high chivalry of modern days demands—among other virtues—a devotion to the ideals of a noble and vigorous expression; that he is indeed a caitiff squire who would continue to sully his speech with the mongrel common-places of the circling crowd. He only is worthy of the accolade who is willing to go on new and difficult adventures for which the accoutrements of a rigorous training give him confidence and initiative. Such a leader will gather his group about another Table Round, make them loyal to the royal in themselves, and frame for them a modern Arthur's oath.

*I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
 To hold the English tongue in reverence high,
 As if it were their conscience strict and true;
 To void the sullied and uphold the pure,
 To venture forth, in field or crowded mart,
 Equipped in armor riveted in steel
 Of firmest knowledge and the master strength
 Of individual thought, and faith, and skill:
 To speak no commonplace, nor listen to it,
 To honor his own words because they voiced
 A truth that's bulwarked by convictions deep.
 Or, in lighter vein, to fleck his speech
 With humor and with fancy's vibrant glow.
 All this we invoke to curb the base in art,
 And teach high thought, the expressive word,
 And the chivalry that democracy demands.*

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